

Handout - Coiling

Take This



Slab and mound of wedged clay

Make This



Coiled mug

Read

Tools Needed:



Preparation: **Slab clay at 3/8"** Using the top of an empty water container, cut a circle out of the slab. The circle will be the base of the mug.



Slab of clay



Circle cut-out



Circle on project board

The empty water container will make a base about 3" across. The height of the mug will be about 4". Place the base on a project board. **DO NOT** start adding coils to the slab until the base is on a project board or it will stick to the desk top.

Making the Coils: Coiling is the process of taking ropes of clay and stacking them on top of one another to form a shape. The clay should be well wedged and not too wet. Start by taking a hunk of clay and making it into a rope of clay. Roll the clay with your hands on the top of the desk. The desk should be dry, otherwise the clay will stick to the desk top and make it difficult to roll.



Rolling clay on the table

Rolling the clay: With one hand over the other, start rolling in the middle of the hunk of clay. Move the hands away from each other as the clay is rolled; the roll should have even thickness throughout coil length. If any part is thicker than the rest, move hands to that area and do some additional rolling until you have a consistent thickness throughout the entire rope of clay.



Clay being wet



Clay being scratched

Attaching the rolls: Attach the roll of clay to the slab base, keeping the base on the project board. Both the base and the roll of clay need to be damp and soft—**DRY CLAY WILL NOT ATTACH.** Applying a little water to the clay with a wet sponge and scratching the surfaces with the needle tool will help it adhere.

Coiling the walls of the mug: Begin attaching the end of the coil to the slabbed base.



A long coil attached to the slab base



Continuing the coil

Press the beginning of the roll to the base so it creates an angle. Lay the coil around the circumference of the slab. Continue to coil, layering the rope of clay to the end. At the end of the rope of clay, press down the end to create an angle to begin a new rope of clay: this is where the second coil will begin.



**Coil ending and being pressed down
For the next coil**



Hands compressing coils

Make a second coil and attach it. As you work up the coil, compress the coils onto each other. Continue this process until you reach the desired height.

Smoothing out coil walls: Smooth out the walls using a rib and a hand for this step. Put your hand on the inside of the mug for support and wipe up or up and down with the rib on the outside of the mug with the rib tool.



Using a rib to sooth out the outside of the mug



Use a wood sculpting tool to smooth out the inside

Smooth out the inside of the coiled mug by placing one hand on the outside of the mug for support and using the wooden sculpting tool to smooth out the inside. Take a wet sponge to finish out the smoothing process for both the inside and outside of the mug.



Smoothing out a mug with a sponge Tapping the top with a project board

The rib and sculpting tool are used to shape the mug. Take a project board and tap the top of the mug to make it flat and even. If the top is not even add more coils to make it even. If necessary, trim the excess roll with a needle tool.

Pulling a handle: It is critical that the clay used to pull a handle is well wedged. Throw the well wedged clay on the wedging table until it is in the shape of a spike.

We throw the well wedged clay on the wedging table to:

1. Get in the shape of a spike to begin the handle pulling process
2. Get out any remaining air bubbles that might have been missed during wedging
3. To begin to stretch the clay.



Throwing the clay onto the table



Creating a spike

When done throwing it down it should look like a spike. A good example of a spike is the one that was used to join the two railway across the United States



Round the shape of the spike. Pat the top down to make the head of the spike. Pounding the top of the piece of clay to make the top. We do this because it is easier to hold as we are pulling the handle. As you pull you also need to turn at the beginning, having this thicker top makes it easier.



Spike with head



Holding spike over blue bucket with water

Begin pulling the handle: Use a blue bucket and fill half with water. Hold the spike by the head. Dip your free hand in the water and wipe the spike starting at the top and pulling downward. Rotate the spike 1/3 of a turn and wipe it again. Continue wiping the spike with water with increasing pressure. Each time you dip your hand into the bucket and begin the wiping, water should be dripping off the spike.



Holding the spike



Getting spike wet



Wiping spike

Keep rotating the spike and pulling down (wiping) on the clay. It is important to make the downward movement quickly and **all the way off** the end of the spike. The clay will stretch downwards and stay round. Stop pulling when the desired thickness is formed. Flatten the handle by pressing a thumb into the round handle pull it down slowly. Get the handle wet and repeat pressing your thumb into the groove you made the first time.

Repeat this pulling until the handle is the desired thinness.



Thumb pressure pass



Breaking off the handle



Break off enough to make the handle and place it on a project board with the groove on the outside. Allow the handle to dry for at least 15 minutes before attaching it to the mug.

Attaching the pulled handle: Before attaching the handle to the mug, lay it on its side and cut the ends even with a needle tool so they can lay flat on the side of the mug.



Handle being cut with a needle tool



Handle with even ends

Place the handle into position on the mug and mark the spots where the handles will be attached on the mug with a needle tool.

Scratch the connecting surfaces on the handle and the mug with a needle tool and use a wet sponge to wet those areas. Compress the handle into place. Seal the seams with the wooden sculpting tool.



Scratched handle



Sealing seams

Design and sculpt embellishments on the outside of the mug. Allow the mug to dry on the project board.



Sculpting something on the outside of a mug



Mug ready to dry

Watch – the Video.

Do – This is when students put what they have learned into action.

